



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Little Scholars Nursery
The Centre for the Child
Glyndŵr University
Mold Road
Wrexham
LL11 2AW
United Kingdom**

Date of inspection: June 2014

by

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Reporting Inspector**

for

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the setting's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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Context

This English medium setting has been established since 2004 and it is based on the campus of Glyndŵr University, Wrexham. The setting serves students and staff of the university, together with the general public. The nursery is privately run by the proprietor and two managers. All staff are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children.

The setting provides day care for children between six weeks and four years of age and is open for five days per week, mornings and afternoons. It also provides part-time funded education for three-year-olds each afternoon. There were 18 funded children at the time of the inspection.

Most children who attend the setting are British and use English as their first language. A few children have additional learning needs.

The setting was last inspected by Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in September 2013 and by Estyn in 2008.

Summary

The Setting's current performance	Good
The Setting's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

- children make good progress in the setting;
- nearly all children develop literacy and numeracy skills well during their time in the setting;
- standards of children's wellbeing are excellent;
- behaviour in the setting is very good;
- learning experiences are varied and interesting;
- the quality of teaching is good;
- the setting provides good quality care, support and guidance for all children; and
- the learning environment is of very high quality.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- leadership is good;
- staff share an agreed vision for the setting and work together well to ensure that they fulfil its aims;
- leaders and managers have a good understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement;
- leaders pay effective attention to local and national priorities and there is a strong focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills;
- the setting has a good track record of bringing about lasting improvements; and
- the setting has a range of successful partnerships that it uses well to improve outcomes for children.

Recommendations

R1 Ensure that children have more opportunities to become independent learners

R2 Refine the assessment process

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

Children make good progress in the setting from their starting points. Most children demonstrate high levels of knowledge and understanding in line with their ability and stage of development. For example, they recognise and name many animals that live in Africa and point to the North Pole on a globe. Many children cope well with challenging activities such as using 'walkie talkies' or the telephone to call the nursery office to order resources.

Almost all children develop good communication skills. Nearly all children express their feelings well and are confident when speaking to adults in the setting. They use a well-developed vocabulary to describe and explain the activities they undertake. They share their ideas and carry out complex instructions effectively, for example when preparing and serving fruit to their friends. Most children show great interest in books and stories, both fiction and nonfiction, and follow the content in the correct sequence. All mark make successfully and understand the functions of writing, with a few children starting to form letters correctly.

Almost all children use mathematical language well. For example, they count the number of children present correctly and re-create patterns effectively in their play. A very few more able children are beginning to understand simple addition.

Nearly all children use a variety of information and communication technology (ICT) well as part of their play. They control battery operated toys effectively and use a camera and electronic recording equipment with confidence.

All children make good use of the indoor and outdoor environments to develop an appropriate range of physical skills. These children use a selection of bikes and other wheeled toys successfully to develop gross motor skills.

Nearly all children make good progress in gaining skills in the Welsh language. They describe the weather accurately and show pleasure and enjoyment in songs and rhymes. Children develop a good understanding of Welsh culture and traditions through celebrating festivals, such as St David's Day.

Wellbeing: Excellent

Nearly all children show high levels of self-esteem and are highly motivated and engaged in their learning. They persevere for extended periods and manage their own time well when undertaking directed tasks. All children settle very quickly to activities and follow the setting's routines exceptionally well. As a result, they feel safe, secure and ready to learn. All children are extremely well behaved and kind and courteous to each other. Without exception, children are busy, enthusiastic and highly involved in activities.

All children learn about sharing and taking turns, for example when pushing sound buttons to activate animal noises. They know how to distinguish right from wrong and are aware of and show great respect for the needs of others. Most are confident thinkers and learners. They are keen to talk about what they are doing, such as when re-creating a castle scene from a photograph. All have very positive relationships with each other and the setting's staff. Most children are starting to help their friends effectively, for example when tidying away equipment or taking turns when sharing food in the café.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

Good organisation ensures that children learn successfully and settle quickly to activities. Activities are focused well and planning includes a good range of interesting and innovative learning experiences that engage all children successfully, such as going on a safari. Learning experiences, for example the Nativity preparation and performance, cover outcomes effectively across a range of learning areas. Practitioners encourage children to form positive relationships with each other and with adults and to show respect for all cultural backgrounds. Practitioners make creative and imaginative use of resources to keep the children's interest and to help them to focus on tasks successfully.

The curriculum builds appropriately on children's existing knowledge and understanding. Learning experiences provide good opportunities to develop thinking skills. However, these learning experiences are generally adult directed and there are too few opportunities for children to become independent learners and to select their own resources. They do however move freely between activities and areas set out by practitioners and choose whether to play indoors or out. The setting provides valuable opportunities for children to develop their ICT skills.

Provision for developing children's literacy and numeracy skills is effective. Practitioners extend children's literacy skills by sharing books, including those written in Welsh, and through highly skilled and engaging story telling. There are good opportunities to develop children's early mark making skills and for them to recognise their names. Practitioners use a suitable range of mathematical equipment and activities to develop children's numeracy skills effectively, such as using measuring tapes to find the longest water tray.

All practitioners use Welsh regularly and they encourage the children to answer simple questions and to respond to Welsh instructions. Children have good opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and traditions through learning a range of Welsh songs and celebrating festivals, such as St David's Day.

Children have beneficial opportunities to learn about caring for living things by looking after the birds in their garden. Practitioners make appropriate use of visits and visitors to enhance children's learning experiences.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a good knowledge of child development and of the requirements of the Foundation Phase. They use a stimulating range of teaching techniques and innovative learning experiences, particularly outdoors, to maintain children's interest effectively. Practitioners have high expectations of children and know generally when to intervene in children's learning. They use skilful questioning to extend children's knowledge and understanding successfully.

All practitioners work well as a team. They have a good understanding of what is required of them. As a result, there is consistency of approach in managing such things as children's behaviour.

Practitioners make regular observations of the children. They generally use these well to inform future planning and to identify the children's next steps for learning. However, information is not always used in a timely way to inform assessment records and keep them current.

The setting provides parents with useful information about their child's progress through parents' evenings, individual written reports identifying what children do well and what parents can do at home to support their children's learning and daily feedback.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides a good level of care, support and guidance for all children. As a result, children feel secure and learn effectively.

The setting promotes children's health and wellbeing successfully. It introduces children to a range of healthy foods, some of which have been grown by the children in the outdoor area. Practitioners encourage children to drink plenty of water and to wear sunhats and sun cream in hot weather. Daily outdoor sessions encourage children to be active and to use physical apparatus with increasing control.

An appropriate range of learning experiences fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Children have good opportunities to learn about the importance of caring for the environment through growing fruit, flowers and vegetables in their garden, observing birds and wildlife and recycling.

There are comprehensive arrangements to support children with additional learning needs. Practitioners provide highly effective support for children who need extra help with their learning. The setting draws upon a suitable range of external agencies to support children with additional learning needs.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Excellent

The setting's ethos creates a welcoming atmosphere for the children. It is an inclusive community where every child receives equal access to all learning experiences. There is a clear emphasis on respecting equality and diversity.

Overall learning resources are of exceptionally high quality. The setting uses these innovatively, particularly in the outdoor areas, to support and extend children's learning very successfully. Resources are easily accessible for children and support the requirements of the Foundation Phase well.

The building and the site offer high quality facilities. These are bright, attractive and well maintained. The outdoor learning environment has been carefully designed to maximise opportunities for learning using the space available. The organisation of a 'learning village' within the outdoor area provides very good opportunities for the setting to enhance children's play experiences particularly effectively. The site is safe and secure.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Good
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Leadership: Good

Good leadership contributes positively to the wellbeing and levels of progress and achievement of the children. Learning and teaching are managed well and leaders have a clear understanding of the progress children make.

The proprietor supports the nursery very effectively through sound advice and guidance. Leaders and managers respond positively to this and ensure that any changes impact positively on provision and standards. Staff share an agreed vision for the setting and work well together to ensure that they fulfil its aims. They are enthusiastic and well motivated. Leaders have international links with other professionals and take good account of local and national priorities, and sessions have a suitable focus on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills and supporting their wellbeing.

The team of practitioners is exceptionally highly qualified. All staff have clear job descriptions, are aware of their roles, responsibilities and duties and are deployed well to support children's learning. There are appropriate processes in place to appraise their performance. Leaders use these processes well to identify training needs and they respond to these needs appropriately. They support staff effectively in developing their knowledge of the Foundation Phase and improving their skills in delivering it. All staff are eager to improve their performance and strong emphasis is placed on opportunities for continuous professional development.

Improving quality: Good

The setting has developed effective self-evaluation processes that identify its strengths and areas for development well. It reviews its practices regularly and encourages staff to feed into this process. Through the use of questionnaires, the setting takes good account of the views of parents. Children have useful

opportunities to talk about the activities that they enjoy and to say what they like or do not like about the setting. The proprietor uses information from the self-evaluation process well. This information informs planning for improvement well. External quality assurance awards are undertaken, such as the Healthy and Sustainable Pre school, which has a highly positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the children.

As a result, the setting has a good track record of bringing about lasting improvements.

The setting has a positive culture of practitioners sharing their expertise and knowledge. Practitioners are willing to learn new ways of working and use information from training well to develop their practice for the benefit of children. As a result, they effectively raise standards and support the learning of the children.

The setting has successfully addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has an appropriate range of effective partnerships that impact positively on children's wellbeing and the standards that they achieve such as the health professionals and the expert advice and support from the Early Years Centre.

Partnerships with parents are strong. The setting encourages parental feedback to ensure that it identifies any issues or concerns and can deal with them promptly. The setting keeps parents informed appropriately about the activities children undertake on a daily basis and parents value this communication.

The setting has an appropriate partnership with the local authority advisory teacher who visits the setting to provide guidance. The setting acts positively on advice provided. For example, it has introduced a greater range of musical instruments for children to experiment with.

There are good partnerships with local schools to ensure smooth transition for children to the next stage in their learning. There is a successful relationship with the university, which provides useful opportunities for the setting to use some of its facilities, such as a theatre to perform the annual Nativity, and the drama department where students work with the children to create short performances.

Resource management: Good

The setting has a comprehensive range of resources to deliver the Foundation Phase curriculum. It makes exceptional use of the outdoors to develop children's skills across all areas of learning.

All practitioners have good opportunities to learn from others and to share good practice. There are effective arrangements for practitioners to access additional training and managers evaluate the impact of this well.

Leaders have a very good understanding of budget matters and successfully take into account the developing needs of the children. This means that managers plan for future resource needs effectively.

The setting successfully promotes activities that encourage children to learn and progress. As a result, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
Overall I am satisfied with the setting.	13	10 77%	3 23%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		80%	19%	0%	0%		
My child likes this setting.	13	10 77%	3 23%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn hoffi'r lleoliad hwn.
		85%	15%	0%	0%		
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.	13	9 69%	4 31%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhlentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn y lleoliad.
		86%	13%	0%	0%		
My child is making good progress at the setting.	13	10 77%	3 23%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn y lleoliad.
		80%	18%	1%	0%		
Children behave well in the setting.	13	9 69%	3 23%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		69%	26%	1%	0%		
Teaching is good.	13	11 85%	1 8%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		79%	18%	0%	0%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	13	7 54%	5 38%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		82%	15%	0%	0%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	13	9 69%	3 23%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Caiff fy mhlentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		73%	22%	0%	0%		
My child is safe at the setting.	13	11 85%	2 15%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn ddiogel yn y lleoliad.
		85%	14%	0%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.	13	9 69%	4 31%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		65%	24%	1%	0%		
I am kept well informed about my child's progress.	13	8 62%	4 31%	1 8%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		63%	29%	5%	1%		

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.	13	10 77%	3 23%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n gysurus ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r lleoliad, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		80%	18%	1%	0%		
I understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints.	13	5 38%	7 54%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Rwy'n deall trefn y lleoliad ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		62%	29%	3%	1%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to school.	13	7 54%	4 31%	0 0%	0 0%	2	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol.
		71%	23%	1%	0%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	13	8 62%	3 23%	0 0%	0 0%	2	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		62%	30%	4%	0%		
The setting is well run.	13	9 69%	4 31%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.
		82%	17%	1%	0%		

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mrs Anne Elizabeth Manning

Reporting Inspector

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Glossary of terms

Areas of Learning	<p>These are the seven areas that make up the Foundation Phase curriculum in English-medium settings. (Welsh-medium settings are not required to teach Welsh language development as this is already the language of the setting.) The Areas of Learning are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity • language, literacy and communications skills • mathematical development • Welsh language development • knowledge and understanding of the world • physical development • creative development
CSSIW	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	This local authority partnership approves settings as providers of education. It also has the power to withdraw funding from settings which do not comply with the partnership's conditions of registration.
Foundation Phase	The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from 3 to 7 years of age.
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.
Local authority advisory teacher	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.
Mudiad Meithrin	A voluntary organisation, which aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years services and experiences through the medium of Welsh.

Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.